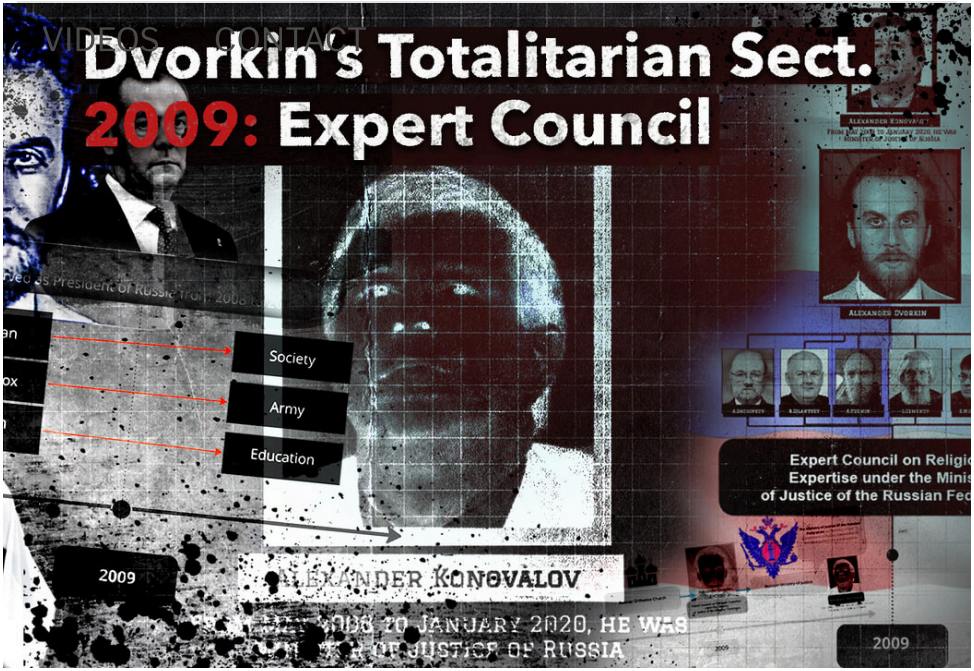

ARTICLES

Dvorkin's Totalitarian Sect. 2009: Expert Council

March 28, 2025 · 18 mins read

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“I realized that an expert isn’t the one who knows something, but the one who is asked.” A. Dvorkin [1]

In our opinion, the year 2009 was a turning point in the fate of democratic reforms and religious freedoms in Russia, marking their actual dismantling. It was then that the notorious Expert Council on State Religious Evaluation at the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation finally outlined a course to restrict religious diversity. Its reshaped board, led by Alexander Dvorkin, not only legitimized new mechanisms of pressure on undesirable denominations, but also launched the very flywheel of subsequent repression and became a tool for suppressing religious minorities in Russia under the guise of combating extremism. The final stage of the anticult campaign in the run-up to the great war began; exactly the same as the one led by Walter Künneth a century ago in Nazi Germany. We wrote about this in detail many times before, in particular, in our earlier article “Dvorkin’s Totalitarian Sect. Revival of Nazism.”

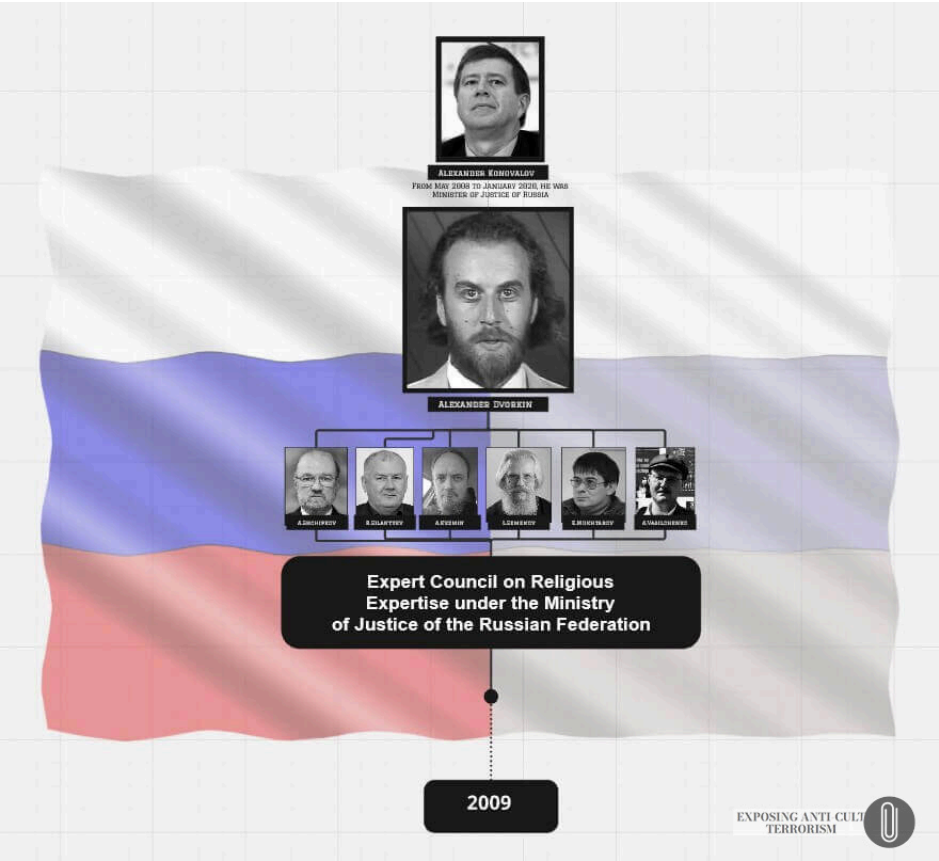
Moreover, we discussed the striking historical analogy that we managed to discern when the increased anticult activity and successful purging of so-called "undesirable cultists and sectarians" took place in both cases — in Germany in 1920-1940 and in Russia in 2000-2014, as a preliminary stage before the outbreak of a large-scale aggressive war. When a country prepares for an armed invasion, it is faced with the task of forming a powerful ideological foundation among the population, primarily through suppression of religious minorities. After all, in conditions of religious pluralism where various faiths peacefully coexist and are recognized as equal, it's extremely difficult to mobilize people for aggressive military actions against a neighboring country. However, judging by the information voiced by Egon Cholakian in the video "Undeclared War," ambitions of the architects of this global conflict extended much farther than Ukraine.

On the example of present-day Russia, we can see that along with the anticult campaign, this process was accompanied by active indoctrination of society through mass media, brainwashing, creating an image of internal and external enemies, restricting civil rights and freedoms, strengthening government control over freedom of religion and conscience, and amending Russian legislation. The religious factor was later used for political purposes. Finally, this process matured to the armed invasion of thousands of military onto the

territory of Ukraine and the beginning of genocide against the Ukrainian population. All of this happening in the 21st century…

Alexander Dvorkin and his RACIRS (Russian Association of Centers for the Study of Religions and Sects) have been directly involved in these processes. A number of articles on our website are dedicated to exposing their terrorist activities. History has yet to understand his role in the tragic events of recent decades.

Yet, let's return to 2009, to the Expert Council on State Religious Evaluation under the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation [2]. First, we'd like to note that at that point, the start of hostilities in Donbas and the annexation of Crimea were a whole 5 years away. The Expert Council was initially established as an advisory body in 1998. However, in 2009, it underwent an unexpected and drastic change in its composition and membership, and Dvorkin became its head.


ALEXANDER KONOVALOV
FROM MAY 2008 TO JANUARY 2020, HE WAS MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF RUSSIA
ALEXANDER DVORKIN
Expert Council on Religious Expertise under the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation
2009
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

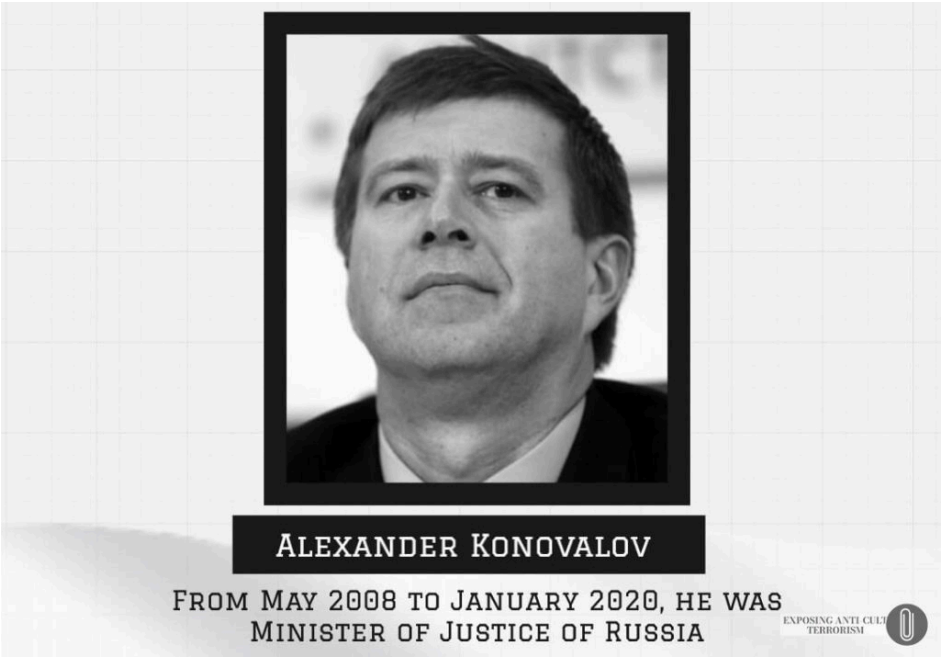
We don't know whose "brilliant" idea it was to put Dvorkin at the head of the reshaped council. However, the above scheme deserves attention, as it clearly implies the hand of someone who was interested to gather, instead of an independent academic council, a "combat" team of radical anticult adherents to fulfill specifically assigned tasks.

At that time, human rights activists, researchers and representatives of religious organizations expressed extreme

dissatisfaction with the new council membership, noting the lack of specialists with necessary qualifications and expertise in religious studies [3]. It's not surprising since it included only one religious scholar. This raised doubts about the council's competence in carrying out expert evaluations. Critics expressed concern that the council's activities could result in restrictions on freedom of conscience and religion as well as increased government control over religious associations, which contradicts the principles of democratic society. Actually, what they warned about in unison back in 2009 has eventually occurred.

We'll talk about those critical opinions in our next article, while for now we suggest trying to answer the following questions: **Was reshaping of the Expert Council part of a preconceived plan, and who was behind it?**

Alexander Konovalov



Alexander Konovalov

Technically, the Expert Council was established by a collective decision within the Ministry of Justice in 1998 [2]. However, Alexander Konovalov [4], who took office as the Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation in 2008, is undoubtedly directly responsible for reshaping the council's structure in 2009 and its continued support. His personal role in this process was key, especially considering his ideological views and closeness to the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC).

At one point, Konovalov was even called a "secret monk," to which he responded in an interview with Rossiyskaya Gazeta ("Russian Newspaper"):

"*Rumors about my 'secret monasticism' are some of the most foolish and ignorant gossip spread in recent years. However, I did receive an Orthodox theological education. I studied part-time at Saint Tikhon's Orthodox University of Humanities (PSTGU)* [5] *while working at the prosecutor's office.*"

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July 19, 2007 15:12

Alexander Konovalov denies rumors about the secret acceptance of monasticism

Plenior of the President of the Russian Federation in the Volga Federal District Alexander Konovalov denied rumors that he secretly accepted monastic tonsure, Interfax reports.

"Rumbing rumors about 'secret monasticism' is one of the most idiotic and illiterate gossip that has been launched in recent years. But I really received an Orthodox theological education - I studied in absentia at the St. Tikhon Humanitarian University, during my work in the prosecutor's office, "he said in an interview published on Thursday in Rossiyskaya Gazeta.

According to A. Konovalov, "for the country only for the better that today traditional denominations (including Orthodox) have returned to the number of universally recognized and authoritative public institutions, which people really trust."

Saint Tikhon's Orthodox University of Humanities [6] as a **Russian forge of anticultism** was previously mentioned in our

article "Modern Inquisition Within the Russian Orthodox Church. PART 1." It was at this institution that Dvorkin himself once taught. As former RACIRS member Valery Ostavnykh claimed in an interview to Islam News, minister Konovalov is actually Dvorkin's student![7]

ISLAM NEWS
ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЕ АГЕНТСТВО РОССИИ

Moscow
+2.6 °C
8 March Saturday, 2:07
8 Ramadan 1446 AH

Fajr	Sunrise	Zukhr	Asr	Maghreb
05:21	07:03	12:40	15:32	18:19

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The near-church mechanism of Islamophobia. Revelation of the former employee of the ROC

Valery Retired reads a report in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. To the right of him, Archbishop of Vladikavkaz and Makhachkala Zosima and sectovich A.L. Dvorkin

Tags:
DVORKIN
RACING
2
MAY 24, 2018 (09 RAMADAN)

Former Deputy Head of the Missionary Department of the Tula Diocese of the ROC Valery Ostezpenny Dard **Extensive interview**which revealed the "internal kitchen" of the organization under the name **Russian Association of Centers for the Study of Religions and Sects** (RACIRS), whose permanent head is **Alexander Dvorkin**.

In addition to the leadership of RACIS, Alexander Leonidovich Dvorkin is a member of the expert religious council under the Ministry of Justice, which is headed by Minister Konovalov - according to the Retired, Dvorkin's student at the St. Tikhonovo Humanitarian University. Dvorkin is not without reason considered the main sectarian of Russia, he owns the authorship of such a thing as a "totalitarian sect". In Muslim circles, Dvorkin became widely known for preaching anti-Islamic views, which he voiced during the time **Scandalous Lectures** in Arkhangelsk, which was replete with offensive statements against the Muslim religion and the Prophet Muhammad.

Konovalov and Dvorkin: Who manipulated whom?

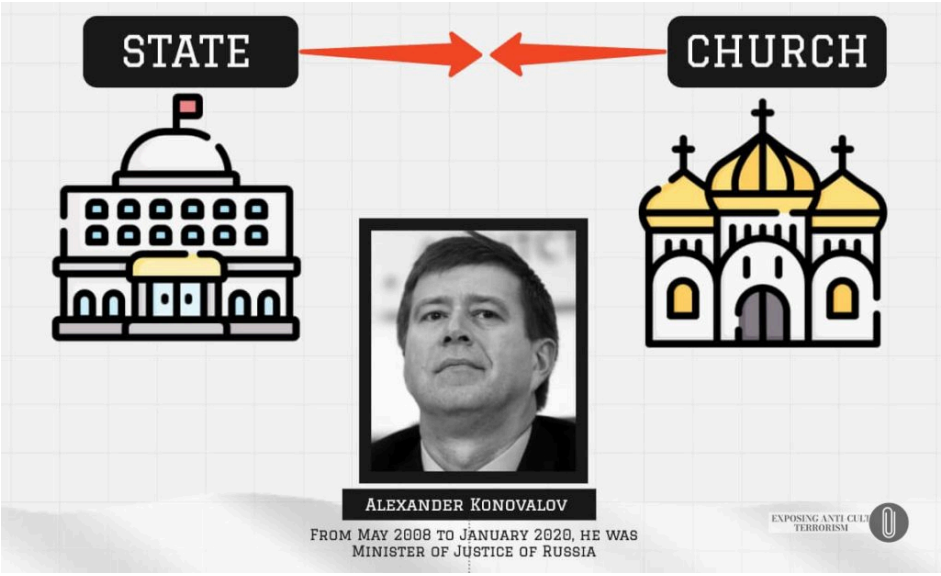
No one can deny that the former Russian Minister of Justice and the country's leading sectologist know each other. Dvorkin was most likely Konovalov's professor, and years later, after becoming minister, Konovalov appointed the sectologist to a very important position — a key position in the fight against democratic freedoms in Russia, we might say. We will elaborate on this topic in upcoming articles.

ALEXANDER KONOVALOV
FROM MAY 2008 TO JANUARY 2020, HE WAS MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF RUSSIA
ALEXANDER DVORKIN
ALEXANDER KONOVALOV
ALEXANDER DVORKIN
FECRIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA IN 2009

Alexander Konovalov and Alexander Dvorkin

The question, however, is different: Who actually manipulated whom in this case? **Did Dvorkin accept the offer of the higher-ranking Konovalov to head the council, or did Konovalov fall under the influence of Dvorkin's toxic ideas?**

The fact that, contrary to the principles of secular society and constitutional foundations, the Russian Minister of Justice supported the idea of tightening control over religious groups can, to some extent, be explained. As a "devout" Christian, he pursued a general policy aimed at strengthening "spiritual security" and fostering closer cooperation between government authorities and the ROC, or the Moscow Patriarchate (MP).



Alexander Konovalov

But how can one explain the presence of the Russian Minister of Justice at the international conference of the anticult organization FECRIS that has an extremely questionable reputation in Europe? Moreover, this event took place in May 2009 in the Russian city of St. Petersburg where, incidentally, Alexander Dvorkin was elected vice president of FECRIS. How can one explain the closed-door meeting with its leaders and the photos with Dvorkin? A public speech by Konovalov was even expected at this gathering, but for some reason, things didn't go as planned, and his opening greeting was instead read by his trusted representative. Thus, the government official was in the midst of anticultists back in the times when the phrase "in our country, the church is separate from the state" did not evoke laughter in Russia.

ALEXANDER KONOVALOV
FROM MAY 2008 TO JANUARY 2020, HE WAS MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF RUSSIA
ALEXANDER DVORKIN
FECRIS
Destructive Cults and Human Rights
Acts of the conference
Destructive Cults and Human Rights
May, 15, Friday:
GREETINGS
Alexander Konovalov, Minster of Justice, Russia presented by Sergey Milushkin, head of department in the Ministry of Justice)
Nicholas Kropachev, Rector of St. Petersburg State University
Friedrich Griess, President of FECRIS, Member of Association against the Dangers of Sects and Cults, Austria
Annelise Oeschger, Honorary President of the INGO Conference of the Council of Europe
Henri-Pierre Debord, Counselor of MILVILUDES (1), France
Tassos Mitsopoulos, Member of Parliament, Cyprus
Christophe Caliman, Federal Magistrate, Belgium
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Alexander Konovalov and Alexander Dvorkin

We do not have a definite answer as to who was behind Dvorkin's appointment as chairman of the Expert Council. It's quite possible that he himself initiated his own appointment, presenting his ideas and views as the foundation for a new supervisory body. What is absolutely clear, however, is who assembled the council's members as a single board. Alexander Shchipkov, Lev Semenov, Roman Silantyev, Alexander Kuzmin, Evgeny Mukhtarov, and Andrey Vasilchenko — all of these figures are known for their rigid fundamentalist stances on religious issues and their ties to anticultism, and all of them were "dragged in" by none other than Alexander Dvorkin. Semenov, Kuzmin, and Mukhtarov were all part of RACIRS. It was Dvorkin who formed the backbone of the council which later became both a symbol and an instrument of state control over the country's spiritual life.

Another interesting fact is described below.

Expansion of authority

By orders signed on February 18 and March 3, 2009, the Russian Minister of Justice Alexander Konovalov not only updated the list of the Expert Council members, but also approved the procedure for carrying out state religious evaluations and significantly expanded the council's powers. This allowed the council to investigate the activities, teachings, leadership decisions, literature, and religious rituals of any registered religious organization and **to provide recommendations to the Ministry of Justice regarding various actions.**

From that point on, the Expert Council had the authority to determine whether the activities or literature of a particular religious organization contradicted the Constitution of the Russian Federation or aligned with the organization's original statements. Based on this, the council could recommend that the Ministry of Justice take corresponding action in the event of identified violations.

The council's official tasks were as follows:

1. To determine the religious nature of an organization based on its founding documents, information about the principles of its doctrine, and corresponding practices.
2. To verify and assess the accuracy of the information contained in the documents submitted by a religious organization regarding the foundations of its doctrine.
3. To check whether the forms and methods of activity declared during the state registration of a religious organization matched its actual activities.

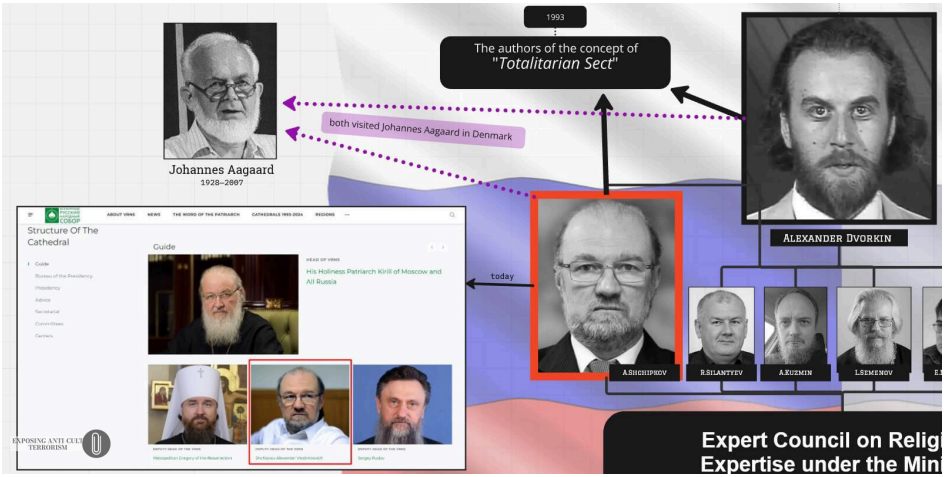
In other words — pay attention! — the council headed by Dvorkin became a supervisory and advisory body empowered to **issue recommendations to the Russian Ministry of Justice!** Thus, the man without an appropriate education, who also had documented psychiatric diagnosis of a mental disorder in his youth, and who is maniacally obsessed with labeling all undesirables as cultists and sectarians, became a mega-expert

and arbiter, covertly shaping the direction of the country's development, wielding influence over religions, and determining fates of millions of people.

Alexander Konovalov and Alexander Dvorkin

Bound by the same chain and united by the same goal

Let us briefly outline the outward connections of Dvorkin's "combat team," for historical record, so to speak.



Alexander Shchipkov and Alexander Dvorkin

Alexander Shchipkov and Alexander Dvorkin:

- Alexander Shchipkov is a prominent representative of the anticult movement in Russia, actively advocating for the protection of traditional values and the fight against destructive cults.
- Both Shchipkov and Dvorkin once attended lectures by Johannes Aagaard at Aarhus University. [8]
- In 1993, the two co-authored the term "totalitarian sect."

- Today, Alexander Shchipkov serves as the deputy head of the World Russian People's Council (WRPC). [9, 10]
- His ideas are often linked to the concept of "spiritual security," aimed at protecting society from the influence of Western values, cults, sects, and non-traditional religions.

Roman Silantyev and Alexander Dvorkin

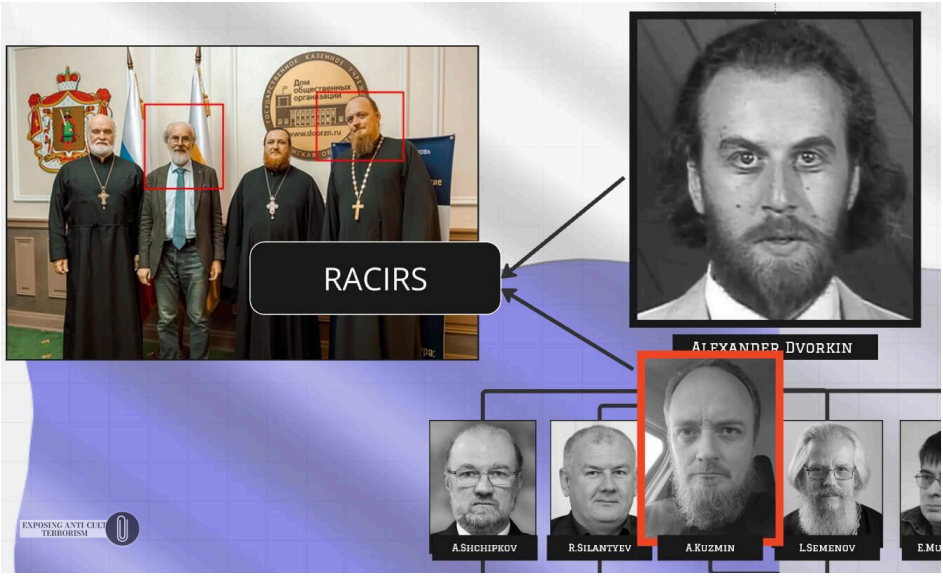
Roman Silantyev and Alexander Dvorkin:

- Both were key figures in the Expert Council on State Religious Evaluation under the Russian Ministry of Justice, with Dvorkin serving as chairman and Silantyev as deputy chairman.
- Together, they participated in evaluating the activities of religious organizations and formed recommendations for

prohibition or restriction of those, particularly of new religious movements (NRMs) they labeled as “sects” and “cults.”

- Both are affiliated with the Center for Religious Studies in the Name of Hieromartyr Irenaeus of Lyons [11], established by Dvorkin. Silantyev has repeatedly served as an expert there.
- They were involved in compilation of “**blacklists of sects and cults”** where they included Jehovah’s Witnesses, Scientology, the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon, and others.
- Criticism of NRMs: Both labeled new religious movements as **“totalitarian sects,”** accusing them of mind manipulation, destruction of families, and severing ties with society.
- They actively promoted the idea that the ROC is the foundation of Russia’s spiritual security.
- “Spiritual security” concept: Their works and speeches are aimed to counteract “Western influence” through religious groups.
- Joint publications: Silantyev and Dvorkin often cited each other in their works. For example, Silantyev referenced Dvorkin’s studies in his book “Modern History of Islam in Russia.”
- They appeared on the same TV programs (e.g. on the Spas channel) where they criticized “sects” and “cults” and supported anticult legislation.
- Both acted as experts in drafting laws against “religious extremism,” which were later used to ban groups like Jehovah’s Witnesses.

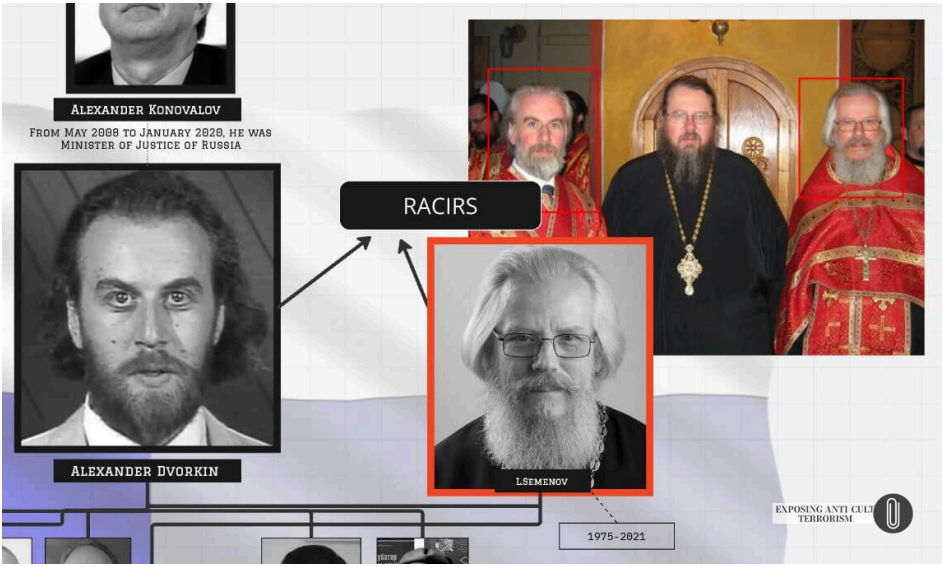
- Government grants: Their organizations and research have been frequently funded with government resources or through government-affiliated entities.
- Dvorkin and Silantyev repeatedly used terms like “fascism” and “Nazism” to describe the Ukrainian authorities, especially after 2014. Their stance is part of a broader “Russian World” ideology which was used to justify aggression.



Alexander Kuzmin and Alexander Dvorkin

Alexander Kuzmin and Alexander Dvorkin:

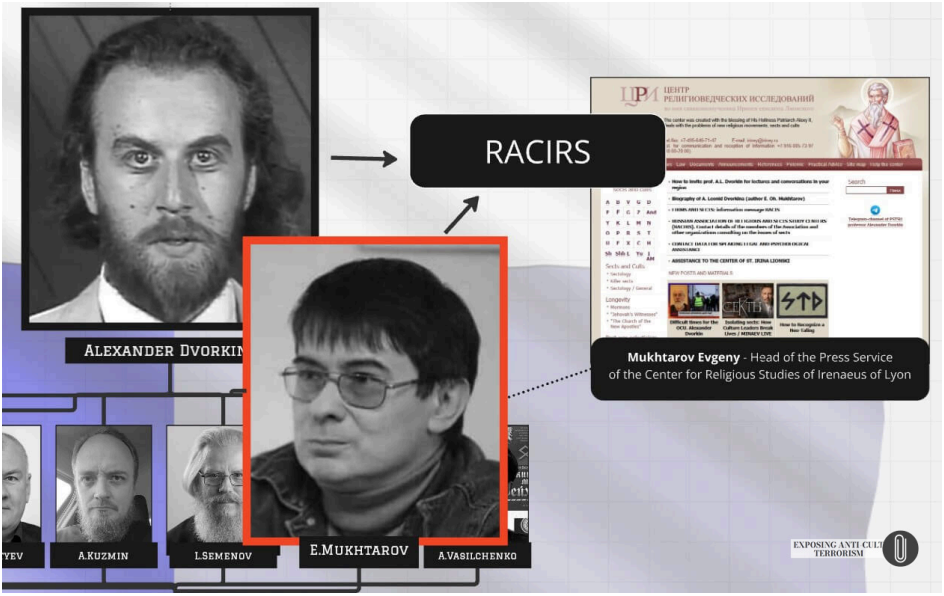
- Both are members of RACIRS (Russian Association of Centers for the Study of Religions and Sects).
- Alexander Kuzmin represented RACIRS’ branch in Saratov.



Lev Semenov and Alexander Dvorkin

Lev Semenov and Alexander Dvorkin:

- Both are members of RACIRS (Russian Association of Centers for the Study of Religions and Sects).



Evgeny Mukhtarov and Alexander Dvorkin

Evgeny Mukhtarov and Alexander Dvorkin:

- Evgeny Mukhtarov [2] is the head of the press service of the Center for Religious Studies in the name of Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons [11].
- Mukhtarov is Dvorkin's biographer.
- Both are members of the Russian Association of Centers for the Study of Religions and Sects (RACIRS).

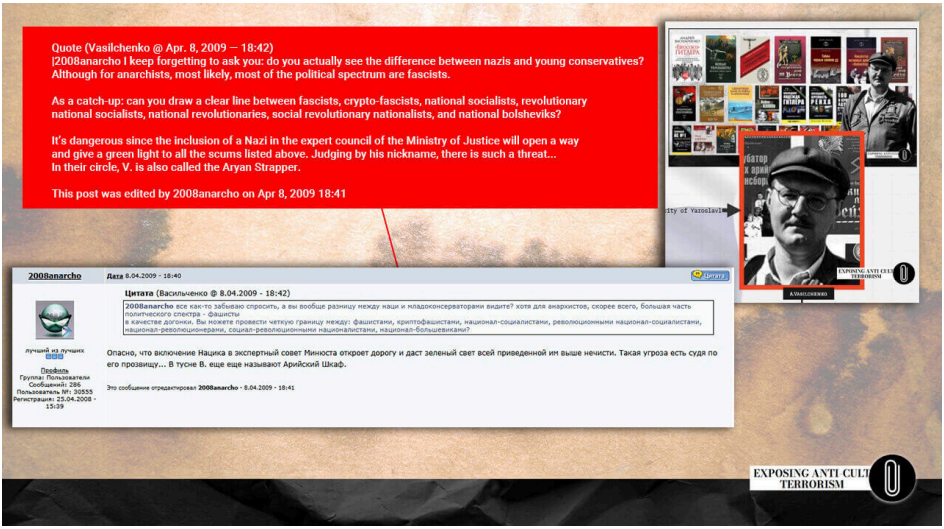
Evgeny Mukhtarov and Andrey Vasilchenko

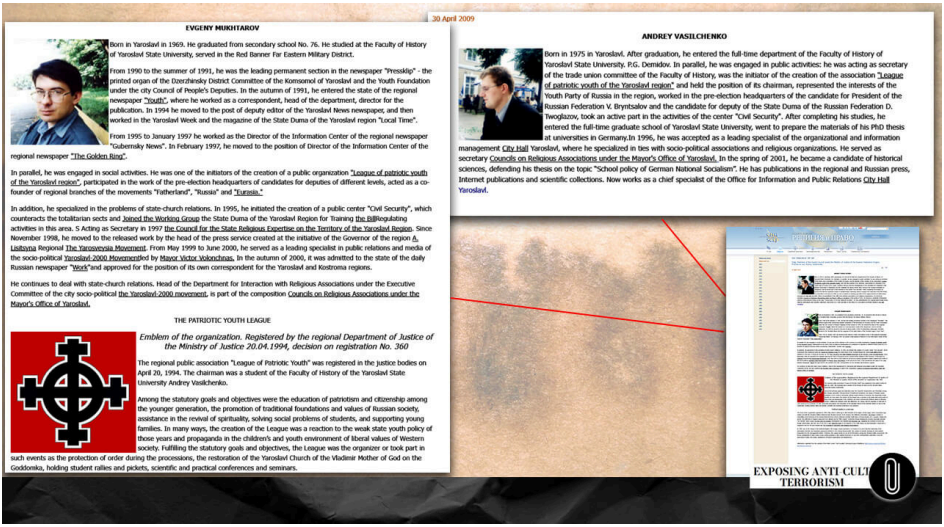
Evgeny Mukhtarov and Andrey Vasilchenko:

Evgeny Mukhtarov “pulled” Andrey Vasilchenko into the Expert Council. They lived in the same city, Yaroslavl, and knew each other well.

It is astonishing how a person who has dedicated himself to studying the history of Nazi Germany, who holds peculiar views on Hitlerism and has written over 30 books on the history of the Third Reich, ended up being a member of the Expert Council under the Russian Ministry of Justice. A note was found on one of the forums, stating that Vasilchenko had the nickname “Aryan Strapper” [12] in his circle. As the saying goes, “Russia is baffling to the mind.” Although, to be honest, there’s nothing baffling here: members of the “independent academic” council were definitely selected by Dvorkin based

not on professional criteria, but rather on personal sympathies and connections.


Quote (Vasilchenko @ Apr. 8, 2009 — 18:42)
|2008anarcho I keep forgetting to ask you: do you actually see the difference between nazis and young conservatives? Although for anarchists, most likely, most of the political spectrum are fascists.
As a catch-up: can you draw a clear line between fascists, crypto-fascists, national socialists, revolutionary national socialists, national revolutionaries, social revolutionary nationalists, and national bolsheviks?
It's dangerous since the inclusion of a Nazi in the expert council of the Ministry of Justice will open a way and give a green light to all the scums listed above. Judging by his nickname, there is such a threat... In their circle, V. is also called the Aryan Strapper.
This post was edited by 2008anarcho on Apr 8, 2009 18:41
2008anarcho
Дата 8.04.2009 - 18:40
Цитата (Васильченко @ 8.04.2009 - 18:42)
2008anarcho все как-то забываю спросить, а вы вообще разницу между наци и младоконсерваторами видите? хотя для анархистов, скорее всего, большая часть политического спектра - фашисты
в качестве догонки. Вы можете провести четкую границу между: фашистами, крипто-фашистами, национал-социалистами, революционными национал-социалистами, национал-революционерами, социал-революционными националистами, национал-большевиками?
лучший из лучших
Профиль
Группа: Пользователи
Сообщений: 286
Пользователь №: 30555
Регистрация: 25.04.2008 - 15:39
Опасно, что включение Нацика в экспертный совет Минюста откроет дорогу и даст зеленый свет всей приведенной им выше нечисти. Такая угроза есть судя по его прозвищу... В тусне В. еще еще называют Арийский Шкаф.
Это сообщение отредактировал 2008anarcho - 8.04.2009 - 18:41
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM


30 April 2009
EVGENY MUKHTAROV
Born in Yaroslavl in 1969. He graduated from secondary school No. 76. He studied at the Faculty of History of Yaroslavl State University, served in the Red Banner Far Eastern Military District.
From 1990 to the summer of 1991, he was the leading permanent section in the newspaper "Pressklip" - the printed organ of the Dzerzhinsky District Committee of the Komsomol of Yaroslavl and the Youth Foundation under the city Council of People's Deputies. In the autumn of 1991, he entered the state of the regional newspaper "Youth", where he worked as a correspondent, head of the department, director for the publication. In 1994 he moved to the post of deputy editor of the Yaroslavl News newspaper, and then worked in the Yaroslavl Week and the magazine of the State Duma of the Yaroslavl region "Local Time".
From 1995 to January 1997 he worked as the Director of the Information Center of the regional newspaper "Gubernsky News". In February 1997, he moved to the position of Director of the Information Center of the regional newspaper "The Golden Ring".
In parallel, he was engaged in social activities. He was one of the initiators of the creation of a public organization "League of patriotic youth of the Yaroslavl region", participated in the work of the pre-election headquarters of candidates for deputies of different levels, acted as a co-founder of regional branches of the movements "Fatherland", "Russia" and "Eurasia."
In addition, he specialized in the problems of state-church relations. In 1995, he initiated the creation of a public center "Civil Security", which counteracts the totalitarian sects and Joined the Working Group the State Duma of the Yaroslavl Region for Training the Bill(regulating activities in this area. S Acting as Secretary in 1997 the Council for the State Religious Expertise on the Territory of the Yaroslavl Region. Since November 1998, he moved to the released work by the head of the press service created at the initiative of the Governor of the region A. Lisitsyna Regional The Yaroslavsia Movement. From May 1999 to June 2000, he served as a leading specialist in public relations and media of the socio-political Yaroslavl-2000 Movementled by Mayor Victor Volonchnas. In the autumn of 2000, it was admitted to the state of the daily Russian newspaper "Work"and approved for the position of its own correspondent for the Yaroslavl and Kostroma regions.
He continues to deal with state-church relations. Head of the Department for Interaction with Religious Associations under the Executive Committee of the city socio-political the Yaroslavl-2000 movement, is part of the composition Councils on Religious Associations under the Mayor's Office of Yaroslavl.
THE PATRIOTIC YOUTH LEAGUE
Emblem of the organization. Registered by the regional Department of Justice of the Ministry of Justice 20.04.1994, decision on registration No. 360
The regional public association "League of Patriotic Youth" was registered in the justice bodies on April 20, 1994. The chairman was a student of the Faculty of History of the Yaroslavl State University Andrey Vasilchenko.
Among the statutory goals and objectives were the education of patriotism and citizenship among the younger generation, the promotion of traditional foundations and values of Russian society, assistance in the revival of spirituality, solving social problems of students, and supporting young families. In many ways, the creation of the League was a reaction to the weak state youth policy of those years and propaganda in the children's and youth environment of liberal values of Western society. Fulfilling the statutory goals and objectives, the League was the organizer or took part in such events as the protection of order during the processions, the restoration of the Yaroslavl Church of the Vladimir Mother of God on the Goddomku, holding student rallies and pickets, scientific and practical conferences and seminars.
ANDREY VASILCHENKO
Born in 1975 in Yaroslavl. After graduation, he entered the full-time department of the Faculty of History of Yaroslavl State University. P.G. Demidov. In parallel, he was engaged in public activities: he was acting as secretary of the trade union committee of the Faculty of History, was the initiator of the creation of the association "League of patriotic youth of the Yaroslavl region" and held the position of its chairman, represented the interests of the Youth Party of Russia in the region, worked in the pre-election headquarters of the candidate for President of the Russian Federation V. Bryntsalov and the candidate for deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation D. Twoglazov, took an active part in the activities of the center "Civil Security". After completing his studies, he entered the full-time graduate school of Yaroslavl State University, went to prepare the materials of his PhD thesis at universities in Germany.In 1996, he was accepted as a leading specialist of the organizational and information management City Hall Yaroslavl, where he specialized in ties with socio-political associations and religious organizations. He served as secretary Councils on Religious Associations under the Mayor's Office of Yaroslavl. In the spring of 2001, he became a candidate of historical sciences, defending his thesis on the topic "School policy of German National Socialism". He has publications in the regional and Russian press, Internet publications and scientific collections. Now works as a chief specialist of the Office for Information and Public Relations City Hall Yaroslavl.
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Evgeny Mukhtarov and Andrey Vasilchenko

In addition, in the 1990s, Mukhtarov and Vasilchenko were members of the League of Patriotic Youth — an organization that had a clear Nazi bias. This becomes evident at first glance at its emblem, which was officially registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation [13].

What were religious scholars and human rights activists afraid of in 2009?

Even back in 2009, many had reasonable concerns that ideological control would take hold in Russia, as the reshaped Expert Council, under the guise of protecting constitutional norms and combating extremism, effectively started to legalize state censorship in the religious sphere. The organization became a tool for suppressing any dissent that did not align with the current political agenda of the authorities, or more specifically, the agenda of the intertwined power of the ROC MP.

They feared that Nazism would be revived in Russia through the following manifestations:

1. The threat to freedom of conscience.

The mechanism for verifying the “authenticity” of teachings and practices would create a precedent for total intervention **not by the state or the titular religion, but by Alexander**

Dvorkin himself (!) into the spiritual lives of citizens. Under the guise of combating extremism and fraud, Dvorkin would gain the authority to declare any religious groups "undesirable"—from independent churches to mystical communities. This constitutes a direct violation of Article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which guarantees freedom of religion.

2. Legalization of repressions. Recommendations from the reshaped Expert Council to the Ministry of Justice will not be "measures against violations" but a system of extrajudicial repressions. Organizations could be liquidated without public hearings and independent expertise, resembling practices from the USSR or modern authoritarian regimes. Such an approach undermines the presumption of innocence and paves the way for mass bans on "undesirable" movements.

3. Centralization of power and suppression of civil society.

The Expert Council will concentrate a monopoly on defining what constitutes "correct" religion in the hands of a narrow group of individuals (essentially, experts loyal to Dvorkin). This resembles part of a broader strategy to eradicate horizontal social connections and replace them with a vertical system of anticult control. Religious organizations that fall outside the

doctrine of the ROC MP would become targets for elimination as potential centers of resistance.

4. Risk of ethnic-confessional division. They feared that the selective application of these measures (for example, against "cults" or religious communities that were unconventional for certain regions) could provoke discrimination based on national or cultural criteria. This would exacerbate interreligious tensions, especially in multi-confessional regions of the Russian Federation, and undermine the secular nature of the state.

5. Creating a precedent for expanding the repressive apparatus.

There were also concerns that the successful implementation of this model in the religious sphere would pave the way for the establishment of similar "expert councils" in other areas — such as culture, science, and education. This, in turn, could lead to the total unification of public life under the control of religious ideologists, law enforcement agencies, and the authorities.

6. Distortion of the foundations of Orthodoxy.

Many feared that Dvorkin would continue to use religious rhetoric to justify inquisitorial repressions, reviving forgotten

dark times. For example, his views and 'expert' reports targeting new religious movements have consistently ignored the principles of compassion and love for one's neighbor, which are the very cornerstones of Christianity. Many worried that the focus on "spiritual war" and "heresies" could lead to the complete stigmatization of religious minorities and even their genocide.

7. Dvorkin's mental deviation.

Intelligent people considered him mentally unwell, and his ideas as extremely dangerous for society, potentially leading to unforeseen consequences on a national scale.

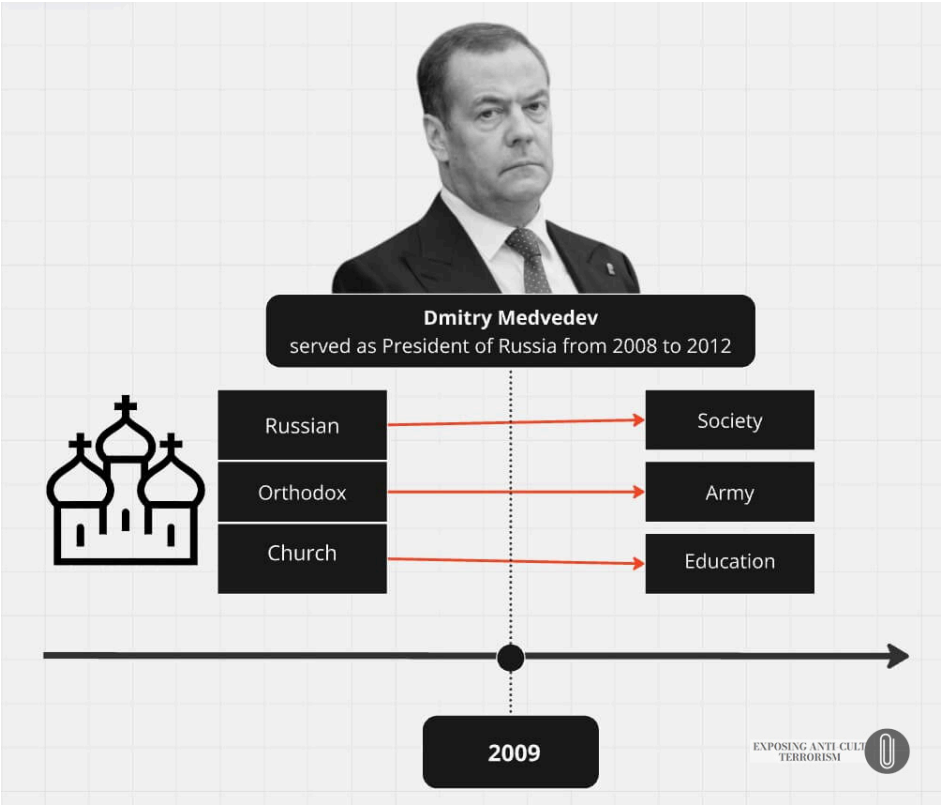
2009 — the year of departure from constitutional principles

In the article "Problems of Implementing Freedom of Conscience in Russia in 2009" [14] authored by Alexander Verkhovsky and Olga Sibireva, the following lines stand out:

"The year 2009 marked a significant departure from the constitutional principles of secularism. This departure is perhaps the most substantial since the adoption of the law on freedom of conscience in 1997, or at least since 2002, when there were heated discussions regarding concepts of state-

religious relations based on privileges for 'traditional religious organizations'.

President Dmitry Medvedev, unlike his predecessor, decided to take decisive steps toward closer ties... primarily with the Russian Orthodox Church. This is not about symbolic gestures or financial support, which characterized the rapprochement policy under Vladimir Putin's leadership. In 2009, decisions were made in two areas that were most crucial for the ROC and other leading organizations of 'traditional religions': the establishment of a military chaplaincy institute and the allowance of religious education in schools."



Dmitry Medvedev

Unfortunately, their concerns have proved to be true.

And further:

"On February 18, 2009, a directive from the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation was published regarding 'State Religious Studies Expertise.' The document established a new procedure for conducting state religious studies expertise, rendering the procedure established in 1998 null and void.

The old procedure required religious studies expertise only during the registration of a new religious organization whose teachings had not previously been assessed for compliance with the concept of a 'religious organization.' The new procedure significantly expanded the scope for involving religious studies expertise. Ministry officials can now seek assistance from the Expert Council if there is suspicion of extremist activity within an organization, particularly if a member has been implicated in extremist activities or if any materials distributed by the organization have been deemed extremist.

In principle, such checks are quite appropriate, and involving experts is desirable; however, ***the very idea of assessing the entire organization for 'extremism'*** *every time an individual commits a relevant illegal act seems questionable, especially when applied to large religious organizations like the ROC."*

Also:

"Religion in the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Structures

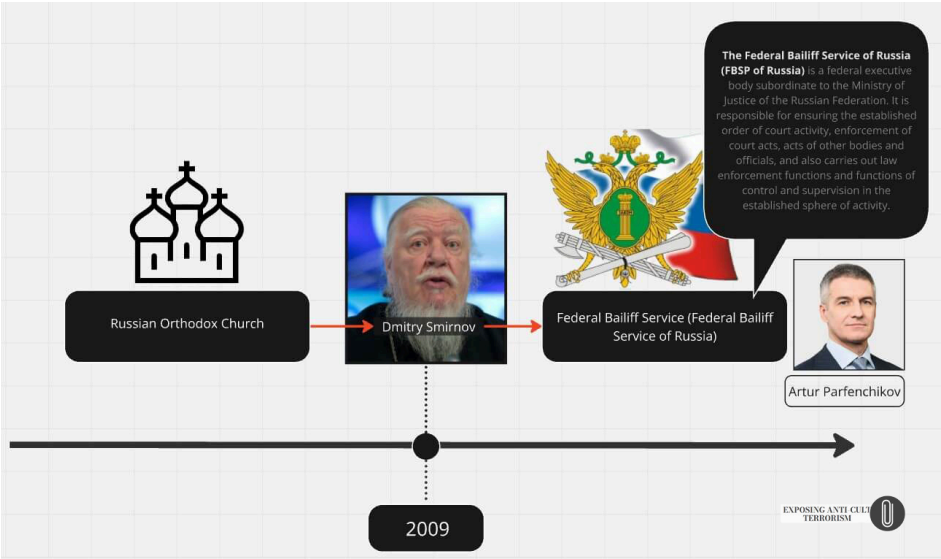
In 2009, a decision was made to introduce a military chaplaincy in the Russian army—discussions about this had been ongoing for the past several years.

In July, President Dmitry Medvedev stated that he supported the idea of introducing military and naval chaplains 'representing traditional Russian denominations,' and he suggested that the appointment of chaplains should be guided by information about the ethnic and confessional composition of the units and formations.

On November 25, Deputy Minister of Defense Nikolai Pankov officially announced the implementation of the military chaplaincy in the Russian Armed Forces starting in 2010."

...

"Cooperation agreements continued to be concluded between religious organizations and law enforcement agencies in various regions. The Federal Bailiff Service began to engage religious figures more frequently. In June, the Director of the Federal Bailiff Service, Arthur Parfenchikov, signed a protocol of intent regarding collaboration with the Chairman of the Synodal Department of the Moscow Patriarchate for Interaction with the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Institutions, Archpriest Dmitry Smirnov."


The Federal Bailiff Service of Russia (FBSP of Russia) is a federal executive body subordinate to the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation. It is responsible for ensuring the established order of court activity, enforcement of court acts, acts of other bodies and officials, and also carries out law enforcement functions and functions of control and supervision in the established sphere of activity.
Russian Orthodox Church
Dmitry Smirnov
Federal Bailiff Service (Federal Bailiff Service of Russia)
Artur Parfenchikov
2009

Religion and secular education

As in the military, 2009 saw a significant event in the field of education, with debates ongoing for several years. In July, President Dmitry Medvedev proposed conducting an experiment in several regions of the country to teach the history of religion, the basics of secular ethics, and the fundamentals of religious culture based on one of the religions included in the “traditional four.”

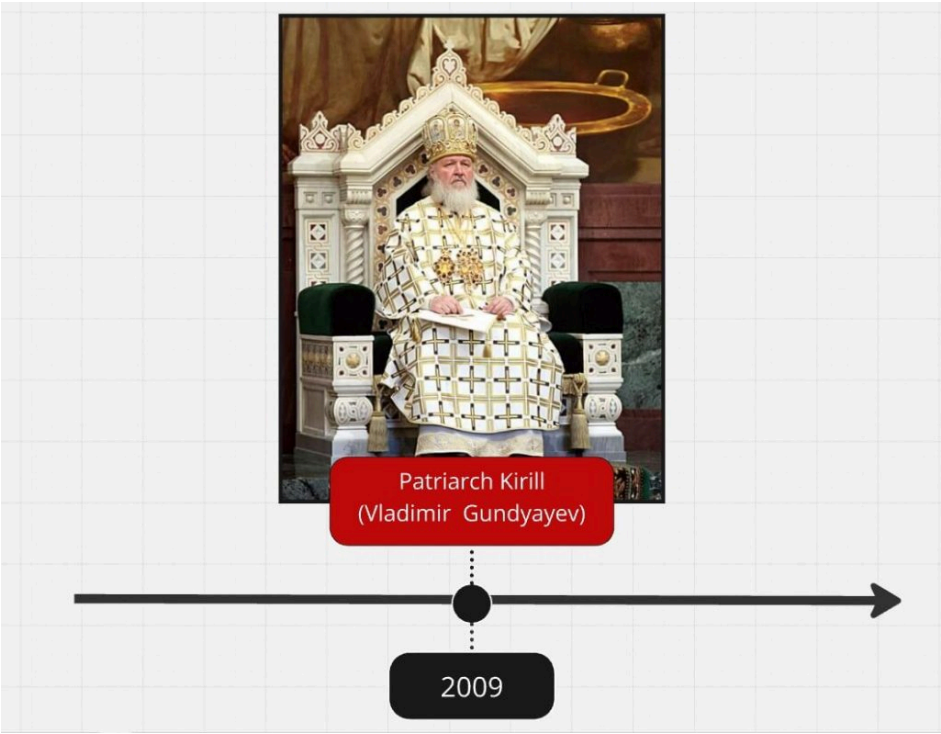
Within the framework of the course, students and their parents would be required to choose one subject from these six options to study based on their preference. It was expected that appropriate groups would be formed even if the request came from a small number of students.

In August, the Ministry of Education and Science confirmed that the experiment would begin in 19 regions across six federal districts. Only fourth-grade classes would participate in the experiment, involving approximately 20,000 classes in 12,000 schools, equating to about 256,000 students and 44,000 teachers. The first lessons within the experiment were scheduled to begin in the spring of 2010…

2009: The Ascension of Patriarch Kirill to the Throne

Finally, 2009 marked the beginning of the reign of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, born Vladimir Gundyayev, who has been mentioned multiple times on our site.

On February 1, 2009, the enthronement of the newly elected patriarch took place during a liturgy at Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. The service was attended by Dmitry Medvedev and his wife; Vladimir Putin, the President of Moldova Vladimir Voronin [15], and Naina Yeltsina, the widow of Boris Yeltsin [16].



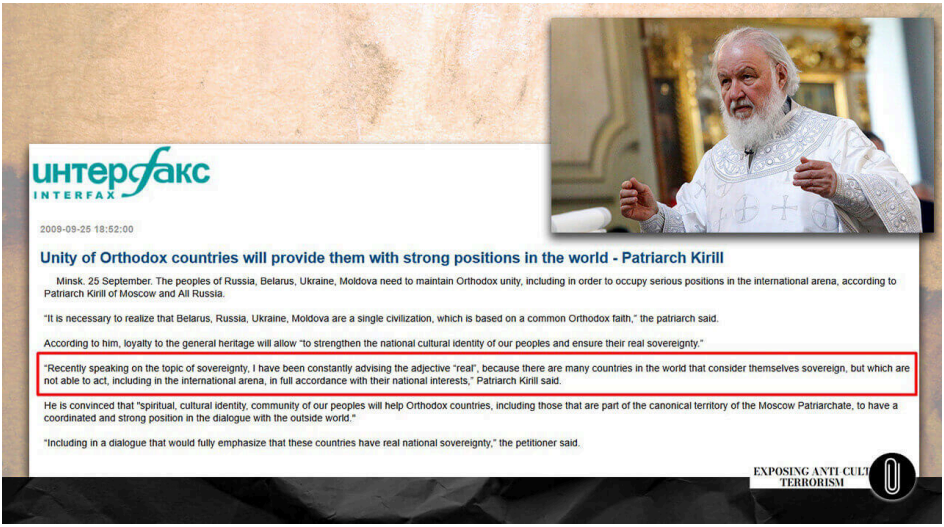
Patriarch Kirill of Moscow

On February 2, 2009, at the Grand Kremlin Palace, President Dmitry Medvedev hosted a reception (official banquet) for the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church, during which Patriarch Kirill spoke about his vision of “symphony” as the ideal relationship between the Church and the state.

The first working meeting with a federal official, holding a state position in the Russian Federation, took place on February 12 at the working residence, with Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Nikolai Patrushev [17].

On September 25, during a visit to Belarus, Patriarch Kirill stated in a meeting with President Alexander Lukashenko that the Church is always ready to support the strengthening and development of the union of brotherly states and to assist in the dialogue between the Belarusian leadership and Russian authorities.

Speaking to the people from the balcony of the under-construction Church of All Saints in Minsk, he expressed his awareness of himself "as the patriarch of a people that emerged from the Kiev baptismal font," implying that the Moscow Patriarchate does not intend to align the boundaries of its local church jurisdiction with the new state borders that emerged after the collapse of the USSR. He questioned the "reality" of the sovereignty of "many countries," explaining that "*there are many countries in the world that consider themselves sovereign, but which are not able to act, including on the international stage, fully in accordance with their national interests*" [18].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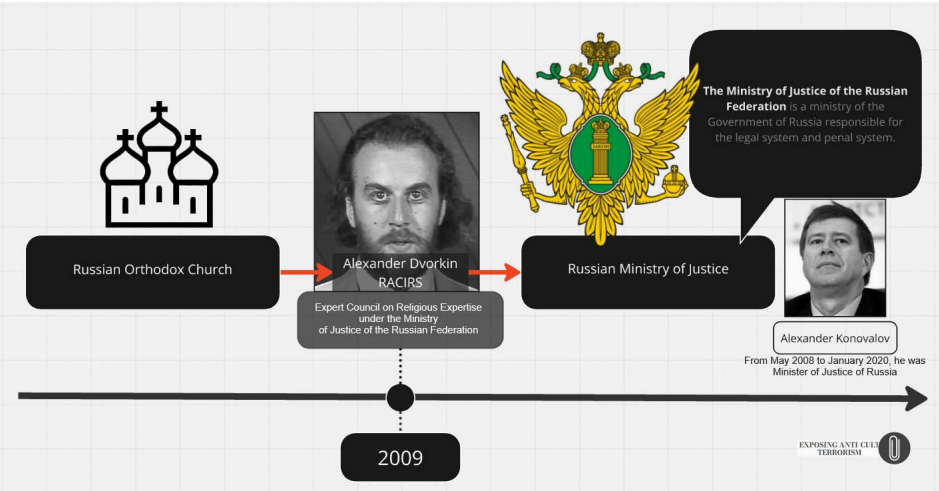
Unity of Orthodox countries will provide them with strong positions in the world - Patriarch Kirill
Minsk. 25 September. The peoples of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova need to maintain Orthodox unity, including in order to occupy serious positions in the international arena, according to Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.
"It is necessary to realize that Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova are a single civilization, which is based on a common Orthodox faith," the patriarch said.
According to him, loyalty to the general heritage will allow "to strengthen the national cultural identity of our peoples and ensure their real sovereignty."
"Recently speaking on the topic of sovereignty, I have been constantly advising the adjective "real", because there are many countries in the world that consider themselves sovereign, but which are not able to act, including in the international arena, in full accordance with their national interests," Patriarch Kirill said.
He is convinced that "spiritual, cultural identity, community of our peoples will help Orthodox countries, including those that are part of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate, to have a coordinated and strong position in the dialogue with the outside world."
"Including in a dialogue that would fully emphasize that these countries have real national sovereignty," the petitioner said.
EXPOSING ANTI CULT
TERRORISM

Instead of conclusions

After the adoption of the “foreign agents” law in 2012 [19] and the intensified fight against extremism, the Expert Council became more frequently involved in examinations of organizations suspected of “activities against traditional values.”

In 2016, following the update of the National Strategy for Countering Extremism, its conclusions began to be used to block missionary activities. Starting in 2017, after the ban on Jehovah’s Witnesses, the council’s role in justifying the “extremism” of non-traditional religions became even more pronounced.


Russian Orthodox Church
Alexander Dvorkin
RACIRS
Expert Council on Religious Expertise
under the Ministry
of Justice of the Russian Federation
Russian Ministry of Justice
The Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation is a ministry of the Government of Russia responsible for the legal system and penal system.
Alexander Konovalov
From May 2008 to January 2020, he was Minister of Justice of Russia
2009
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Their activities in examination and monitoring of religious organizations became part of a broader policy aimed at tightening control over undesirable structures. In this context, the council's recommendations and decisions were used to shape the regulatory framework, which, along with other measures, contributed to an intensified fight against extremism and the establishment of strict control mechanisms.

Their work and statements were utilized to justify the tightening of legislation, including laws on extremism and "foreign agents." For example, they argued that "Western sects" ("cults") and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) are tools of "color revolutions."

In 2009, as soon as the controversial Expert Council of Dvorkin-Konovalov began its work, human rights defenders, religious scholars, and representatives of religious minorities organized the action “No to the Inquisition.” This protest was a preventative reaction to the establishment of the council and the concerns associated with its potential activities. The action became a symbol of resistance against religious discrimination and authoritarian tendencies in Russia.

Stay tuned for our next article, where we will explore what scientists said, whether their voices were heard, and the confrontation between religious scholars and Dvorkin’s totalitarian sect.

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2009 Alexander Dvorkin Alexander Konovalov Alexander Shchipkov democracy Evgeny Mukhtarov Expert Council Kirill Gundyaev RACIRS Roman Silantyev Russia Totalitarian Sects

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